

Topics & Times

Everything will be made of cement by and by.

Perhaps the only sure way to beat a tax on inheritances will be not to die.

Save your old wastebaskets. A little trimming will convert them into fashionable spring hats.

Even classic Boston butts into the municipal corruption procession with a million-dollar graft case.

Mr. Binns, the wireless hero, was fittingly given a ride in a horseless carriage when he reached home.

There is a post office in Nebraska named Tonic, but it is not believed that the postmaster took the office for his health.

English women are in prison for attempting to see Premier Asquith. Judging by his pictures he is not much of a sight, either.

The Treasury Department is to change the pictures on the greenbacks. Most of us will continue to have the same designs on them, however.

Princes George and Alexander of Serbia have traded names, but the people of Serbia are busy hoping each may have retained his own character.

No matter how high prices of bricks may be boosted by a combine of manufacturers, it is not probable that the practice of throwing them will be rendered less popular.

A Missouri judge decides that when a man merely does the chores around the house he is not working. That will hold some men for a while who think they are models of industry.

Prominent citizens who are figuring on taking luncheon with the new President will learn with deep regret that Mr. Taft takes only an apple for lunch, and does not leave any core.

A well-to-do merchant of New Castle, Pa., wrote a scathing letter to his wife and she committed suicide. When he heard of it, he collapsed and was taken to a hospital. How much nicer kindness and forbearance are!

What is heroism, after all, but doing in exceptional circumstances what would be plain duty in ordinary circumstances? It is the one who habitually does the second that fills the bill when given a chance at the first.

A young woman in New York eloped with a gentleman and was greatly surprised to find that she had become the stepmother of nine children by that act. Therefore she deserted her new husband. Is there no romance possible for a widower with children?

While he was on his way home from a bull fight recently King Alfonso of Spain stopped for the purpose of laying the corner stone of a free soup kitchen for the poor. He was probably actuated by a desire that there should be a fitting disposition of the remains of the bulls killed in the ring.

Mother Shipton's alleged prophecy, so long regarded as the most wonderful prediction ever uttered until it was proved to have been a "fake," failed to provide for the automobile, although she did foretell the steam locomotive. But the automobilist's case was anticipated many centuries before. See Nahum, chapter 2, verse 4: "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightning."

"Passengers riding on the platforms do so at their own risk," according to the rule of almost all street railways, and the statement is by no means a mere form of words. A Boston lad stepped from a car in order that two women might alight. As he boarded it again the car started suddenly, and he was injured. He sued the company and got a verdict, but the Supreme Court of Massachusetts has set it aside on the ground that "by voluntarily becoming a passenger on a car so crowded that he could not get inside, he took the risks incident to transportation under these circumstances." It seems hard that an act of courtesy should lead to misfortune, and that this in turn should be met with a "served you right," but such warnings are meant to discourage not the practice of courtesy, but the assumption of unnecessary risks.

President Taft, according to the omniscient newspapers, is helping Mrs. Taft to make the White House a home. The idea is that these good Americans

are going to try to live in the White House as they would if it were their private property, to relegate business to the executive office buildings, to diminish the ceremonial trappings of high position, and make their friends feel "at home." There are difficulties in the way. A public official, no matter where he lives, must resign himself to having his parlor turned into a conference room. One of the most retiring of distinguished American women recently complained that her house had become a public institution. Moreover, no American, shifting and restless as we are, ever feels quite at home in a house hired, or borrowed, for a limited time. It lacks the extra bay window that we put on ourselves, and the "ellum-tree" in the front yard that father planted.

The British chancellor of the exchequer is said to be working sixteen hours a day to contrive ways and means to meet an estimated deficit of sixty-five million dollars in his coming budget. Among the means under consideration are increased license duties, income tax and land tax. Doubtless the new secretary of the American treasury has a fellow feeling with Mr. Lloyd-George, though he has no responsibility for raising revenue to meet the deficiency. That is the business of congress. On both sides of the ocean there seems to be more thought of raising new revenue than of reducing expenditures. Over there they attribute the deficit to old age pensions, which will require nearly forty-five million dollars, though the responsibility might well be shared with increased army and navy requirements. Here we might in the same spirit charge the coming deficit to Civil War pensions, which require more than the largest estimate made of it. We cannot pretend, two generations after the end of the war, that these are anything than a special form of old age pensions. Nevertheless we think that the American people would disband the army and hang up the navy before they would allow the pension list to be touched. Whether we admit it or not, every form of public pensions or other care for the old or poor or helpless is a recognition of the obligation of modern civilization to take charge of the poor it makes. Orphanages and homes for the aged and hospitals as well as almshouses express the sense of this obligation on the part of private founders as well as the state. The industrial civilization by which alone increasing millions can be maintained on the earth's surface produces inevitably extremes of riches and poverty. Privation and suffering intolerant to modern humanity can be prevented only by some form of distribution of the excess among the deficient. They who cry out most loudly against the heresies of Socialism recognize this necessity in other ways.

THE "BELL" OF 1909.



—Louisville Times.

A Burdened Man.

A certain small boy in grade number six was rapidly assuming manly ways. Not long ago, says a writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, there was to be an entertainment at his school. Songs, recitations and a grab-bag were the principal features. The small boy waxed eloquent of the coming glories of this show, and more especially of the part he was to take.

On the morning of the entertainment his mother suggested that he should take his little sister, about four years old, with him. He hung his head.

"Don't you want to take her?" his mother asked.

"No, I don't," he answered.

"Cause there ain't none of the other fellers has to bring their children," was the reply.

Varying Impressions.

"The days are growing longer," said the man who keeps a lookout for the first robin.

"I don't notice any difference," said Sirius Barker; "they seem, as usual, to be getting longer if you count from one pay day to the next, and shorter if you figure the time between rent days."—Washington Star.

If you want to be of assistance to a friend in trouble, do not say, "I'm sorry." That will not help him any, but it may bore him.

The family with a 16-year-old boy in the house has no earthly use for a thirty-six volume encyclopedia.

THE GIRL AT THE DESK.

"I think," declared Mrs. Brewster to her daughter, "that women are just about as mean to other women as they can possibly be. Men are bad enough, goodness knows, when they get to teasing, as your father does every little while. Now up at the library this morning there was an example of what I mean." She pulled off her gloves and sat down to tell the story.

"What happened, mother?" inquired her daughter, quietly continuing her sewing.

"Why, when I went to the desk to return my book, there was a woman there, planted right in front of it. She was looking hard at the girl, just as if she thought she was about the wretchedest person in the world. Then I heard her say:

"I didn't receive a card. How was I to know that it was overdue?"

"We don't send out cards till the book has been three days due," the girl answered.

"Why don't you?" I heard the woman ask. "I should think you might."

"I don't know. It's the rules. They are posted in the front of each book."

"That made the woman pause a minute. Then she said that she didn't read the rules, and she thought she needn't pay the fine, because how could she be expected to know when the book was due if she didn't read the rules? I saw that the librarian was nearly going to say something, but she checked herself just in time.

"The woman said, 'Well, I think you are very unjust, and I shall speak about it to a friend of my husband's, who is one of the trustees—Mr. James C. Wilson. I shall leave my card here to-day and pay the fine to-morrow.'"

"I stepped up to the desk," continued Mrs. Brewster, "and laid down my book. 'I am so sorry,' I began, thinking that the poor girl would be nearly crying with mortification. She did look kind of red about the eyes. But just then she made a funny noise, and I saw she was laughing!"

"Do excuse me," she said, 'but I have such a sense of humor that I can't keep my face straight when a—a—person like that talks like that!'

"Now there," concluded Mrs. Brewster, "as if she wanted to impart a lesson, 'was what I should call a good sensible girl. Shouldn't you, Margaret?'

Glouttonous New Yorkers.

The food supply of New York is so enormous that though the rich and well-to-do gorge from morning to night they simply could not eat at all, says a writer in Success. There would still remain an abundance for every one if some way could be found of distributing the fragments. Just consider the figures which I have on careful authority: New York receives every week 10,500,000 pounds of dressed beef, 12,000,000 pounds of pork, ham and pigs' meat, 1,500,000 pounds of poultry, 1,000,000 pounds of sausages, 1,000,000 pounds of mutton and lamb, over 2,500,000 pounds of liver, heart, tripe, etc., over 1,000,000 pounds of canned meat, 500,000 pounds of game and 1,000,000 pounds of fish.

The fragments of this food, tons and tons of it, are collected every day and carried off to fatten pigs in Jersey or load the fertilizer scows that ply down the bay. Every day of the year from 500 to 900 cartloads of food, much of it perfectly good, are taken from the homes and hotels of New York and simply thrown away. A million people could live and live well on this waste if the problem of collecting and distributing it could once be solved. And I suppose any kind-hearted individual could solve it in a small way himself—with a wagon and a little brains!

Uses for Waste Wood.

Uncle Sam is concerned about the willful waste of wood which seems predestined to create woeful want. Millions of cords of wood are wasted every year in the forest and on the farm because this wood is not suitable for the various mechanical uses for which wood is employed. There are, however, numerous means of disposing of this waste. Aside from tanning and paper making, which are chemical industries that have been established for hundreds of years, there are other industrial uses of more recent origin which are of agricultural importance.

Important among these are destructive distillation, recovery of turpentine, resin, paper pulp, preparation of alcohols and manufacture of acids. These are growing industries because of a steadily increasing demand for wood alcohol, acetates, acetone, turpentine, charcoal, etc., which are utilized in other industries.

The crude products from distillation are chiefly four—gases, tar and oils, charcoal and acids. Methyl alcohol, acetates, acetone, charcoal, turpentine, wood oil and oxalic acid are directly or indirectly obtained on a commercial scale from woods, and the yield is governed largely by specific gravity, weight and kind of wood as well as by the way in which the manufacturing process is carried on.

WAR ON THE HOUSE FLY.

Florida Now Engaged in Extinction of the Pest.

A Jacksonville (Fla.) dispatch to the New York Press says: "A war of extermination against the common house fly is being planned in this State. Edward Hatch, Jr., of New York, came on recently to confer with State Health Commissioner Porter in regard to the start of the fly war, and Dr. Porter has issued instructions for dealing with the pests. The way in which medical men have come to look in recent years on the house fly is shown by the name fastened upon it by Dr. L. O. Howard, United States entomologist. It is 'typhoid fly.'"

"Posters depicting in vivid illustrations the filthy habits of the house fly and its proclivities for gathering and disseminating disease germs are being scattered broadcast throughout this State. The unusually warm weather this spring has started the fly at his work earlier than usual, and the activity by the health official is timely. Atlanta will take up the warfare. Clark Howell of the Atlanta Constitution asserts Atlanta will be made the cleanest and most healthful city in the South. Savannah also has entered the fight. The feeling there is so strong against the fly and its habits that the name of the Sandfly Park district will be changed.

"A vigorous campaign against the fly has been instituted in Louisiana under the leadership of Mrs. Bernard Titche of New Orleans. A code has been established in household affairs, and the housekeeper who is known to permit a fly to become a member of the family is linked with the woman who harbors other notorious insects which all good housekeepers abhor. Southern cities may also adopt the plan of Dr. Woodward, health officer of Washington, D. C., who will prosecute stable keepers who fail to register at his office. The object of the registration is to insure the supervision of the stables by sanitary inspectors, who will enforce measures to prevent the breeding of flies.

"In fact, all the Southern States are fighting the pest now known to be dangerous, and the line of battle will advance northward as the temperature rises. The mode of warfare will be to destroy their breeding places."

Origin of Old Glory.

In the reminiscences of Lord Ronald Gower is found a story of the origin of the stars and stripes.

The "star spangled banner" of the American republic had its origin from an old brass on the floor of an ancient church in Northamptonshire. The brass covers the tomb of one Robert Washington and is dated 1622. On it appears the Washington coat of arms, consisting of three stars, with bars or stripes beneath them. On the first day of the new year, 1776, the thirteen united colonies raised a standard at Washington's headquarters.

This introduced the stripes of the present, but retained the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew on a blue ground in the corner. In 1777 the crosses were replaced by stars, as the Declaration of Independence rendered the retention of the English element unnecessary and inconvenient. In thus adopting the arms of his ancestors as his own distinctive badge Washington no doubt intended the flag merely as a private signal for his own personal following, but it was at once adopted as a national emblem. Probably there is not another case in the world's history in which the private arms of an obscure family have attained such world-wide eminence and repute.

He Could Read.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the poet, and author of the "Story of a Bad Boy," was noted for his wit and a very engaging sort of "happy impudence." In his biography of Aldrich, Ferris Greenslet relates this story:

He delighted to tell of his experience in getting his name reinstated in the voting list of Boston after an absence of a year or two. Appearing before a minor magistrate of the race that, as Lowell said, "fought all our battles and got up all our draft riots," he was asked his name and occupation, and if he could read.

Modestly admitting that he could "a little," the Declaration of Independence was handed to him, and he was told to "Read that."

"Begorra," said Aldrich, "I will! While in the course of human events—"

He was allowed to register

The Educated Grocer.

"Say, mister," said the small boy, breathlessly, "take down this order quick; I got to go to school. Two pounds of coffee at 45 cents; three and one-half of sugar at 7 cents; six boxes of cocoa at 24; two dozen eggs at 32, and four pounds of butter at 40 cents. How much does it come to?"

"Four dollars and eighty-three cents, my little man," said the grocer. "What address, please?"

"Gee! Thanks!" said the schoolboy as he made his escape. "That was the only one I couldn't do!"—Success Magazine.



"Walter, has this steak been cooked?" "Yes, sir; by electricity." "Well, take it back and give it another shock."

She—Is my hat on straight? He—Of course it is. She—Gracious! Then it isn't right. Why didn't you tell me?

Long—To what do you attribute your great business success? Strong—To my wife. She made it necessary for me to earn more money.

The Pilot—What makes her go so slow? The Engineer—We're passing through the milky way and the propeller's full of butter.—Life.

"Would you like some fresh air?" she asked, starting in the direction of the window. "Yes; do you know any?" he replied, thinking she was going to the piano.

She (reading)—Mice are fond of music, and will get as close to it as they can. He—Just cut that out and I'll send it to the girl in the next flat.—Yonkers Statesman.

Automobilist—What advantage has the air ship over the motor car? Aeronaut—Well, for one thing, you can always be sure of making good time on the return trip.—Smart Set.

"Papa!" "Yes, daughter." "Who was Cinderella?" "Why, Cinderella, my child, was the first woman to get a No. 4 foot into a No. 2 shoe. I believe."—Yonkers Statesman.

"I kept my husband on a string five years before I consented to marry him!" "Why so long?" "Well, you see, I waited until I could see his way clear financially!"—Lippincott's.

"Ma," said a newspaper man's son, "I know why editors call themselves 'we.'" "Why?" "So's the man that doesn't like the article will think there are too many people for him to tackle."

"Did Miss Flavilla seem pleased when you asked her to go to the theater?" "Pleased! She wanted to keep the tickets for fear something might happen to me."—Chicago Record.

She—Economizing, are they? You surprise me! I understood they were simply rolling in wealth. He—Well, that may be true, but I believe they have to be careful not to roll too far.—St. Louis Times.

"And you wouldn't begin a journey on Friday?" "You bet I wouldn't." "I can't understand how you can have any faith in such a silly superstition." "No superstition about it—Saturday's pay day."—Chicago Journal.

"I understand you have invented an air ship that won't tip over." "That is my belief," replied the cautious inventor. "At least it won't tip over while on the ground, and it hasn't been anywhere else yet."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Lady—What do you want, my little man? Little Boy (carrying a cat)—I want that dollar you offered as a reward for the return of your canary bird. Lady—That's not a canary; it's a cat. Little Boy—I know it; but the bird's inside.

Vicar's Wife—No, the vicar is not in just now. Is there any message you would like me to give him when he returns? Old Women, cheerfully—Please, mum, Martha Higgins would like to be buried at 2 o'clock to-morrow afternoon.—Punch.

House Owner—You failed to pay your rent last month. What are you going to do about it? Tenant—Oh, I suppose I'll do as you said when I rented it. House Owner—What did I say? Tenant—You said I must pay in advance or not at all.

"Halloa, old chap, where are you off to?" said one man to another. "I'm going over to the postoffice to make complaint about the dilatory delivery." "What's the trouble?" "Why, that check you promised to send me ten days ago hasn't reached me yet."—Tit-Bits.

The following extract from a letter of thanks is cherished by its recipient: "The beautiful clock you sent us came in perfect condition, and is now in the parlor on top of the bookshelves, where we hope to see you soon, and your husband, also, if he can make it convenient."

"You waste too much paper," said the editor. "But how can I economize?" asked the writer. "By writing on both sides of the paper." "But you will not accept articles when they are written on both sides of the sheet." "I know it; but you'd save paper just the same."—Yonkers Statesman.

"When we take charge of the government," says the wise old suffragette, "we will make some changes in the naval bureau." "I should hope so!" agrees the enthusiastic young suffragette. "Why, bureaus are hopelessly out of style! We will have a combination wardrobe and chiffonier."